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EXTENSION SERVICE  
OFFICE OF COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK, WASHINGTON, D. C.

# THIS LOOKS GOOD

PROFIT ROBBERS ON TRIAL  
H.W.Hochbaum,  
Agriculturist, Eastern States

Robert T. Grant, county agricultural agent, Worcester County, Md., wanted to bring home to the potato growers of the county that potato diseases were taking an unusually heavy toll from them. He thought that the teaching carried in news articles and bulletins, and by meetings and demonstrations needed to be supplemented by something more dramatic. The solution was found in a mock trial in which potato diseases were placed on trial as robbers.

This trial was staged as the crowning event of a county tour of potato grower to see demonstrations which showed the good results of fighting disease. The trial was held under the trees on the lawn of one of the leading farmers and demonstrators. It featured the huge losses incurred each year from the three principal potato diseases. These were characterized by three persons appropriately dressed: Ruthless Rhizoctonia, Venomous Virus, and Stealthy Scab, who were on trial for robbing the potato growers of the county. They were declared guilty after much evidence had been presented by witnesses and attorneys.

In sentencing the culprits the judge not only summed up the trial but the whole potato situation as well. The trial with its humor brought out many lessons about the control of potato diseases, as well as improved cultural and marketing practices, which were impressed on the audience. The county newspapers published the entire trial in detail.

Dr. R.A. Jehle, specialist in plant pathology for the Maryland Extension Service and the State leader of county agents, E.I. Oswald, helped Mr. Grant make the affair a success. The story and cast can be obtained from them.

A dramatic feature of this kind also has place at the beginning of an important campaign. It would serve to call popular attention to the big need and help to center interest on the practices recommended as a solution to the underlying problem. If care is taken not to play up the farmer who does not do as he should do too caustically, many people will get the lesson in good humor and with good feeling.

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Original distribution to all extension workers in the Eastern and Central States and to directors and supervisors of county agents in other States.



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